PRICE TWO SHILLINGS

# MUSIC TEACHING DOES IN OUR SCHOOLS MUSIC — AS IT IS AND MATTER? AS IT MIGHT BE

By Irène Armitage

# DOES MUSIC MATTER?

*Music Teaching in our Schools —as it is and as it might be*

*by Irène Armitage*

B. Mus. A.R.C.M.

*Teacher of Sight Reading, Harmony and Composition in the Arts Department of Hendon College of Technology*

WORKERS MUSIC ASSOCIATION
LONDON

## FOREWORD

I should like to thank all those who have contributed to the following pamphlet, and to point out that in every case the opinions expressed are personal ones. It must therefore not be assumed that every contributor is in agreement with all the opinions expressed in the pamphlet.

I. A.

# *DOES MUSIC MATTER?*

A MOTHER WROTE recently to a newspaper complaining that amongst other school expenses, she had been asked to pay fifteen shillings for a recorder for her son. Her comment was: "Of course I wasn't fool enough to do so".

Many parents who buy quite expensive scientific or sports equipment for their children, object to paying even a small amount for anything so unimportant as a musical instrument. The emphasis in education today is on science and technology: the creative arts are an extra—a "frill". At the same time millions of children are getting their earliest impressions of music from the most debased forms of "pop" being plugged on television, and are being treated in their teens as a highly profitable market for big business in the record industry.

It is to the parents and teachers of these children, and to all musicians who value their art and its future, that this pamphlet is addressed.

## Music Teaching (1): As It Is

IN 1962 THE SCHOOLS MUSIC ASSOCIATION carried out a survey covering ten counties, on music in primary and secondary schools. The results corroborated what is already known to the majority of experienced teachers, i.e., that there is no overall plan or continuity in the teaching of music, and that music teaching in schools varies from none at all to a fully equipped music department with specialist teachers.

In infant schools, where music is usually taken by the form mistress, children may pass from a year's musical activity to a year of no music at all, and a room suitably equipped and with enough space for music and movement is rarely available. In junior schools there may still be no music, the attitude being that of one local headmistress who, when asked about music in her school, replied, "We have no time for music".

In secondary education it is rare for music to be taught throughout the school in a planned way. Facilities range from one class period a week in the first two years only, to the well supplied music department

in some independent schools not financed by the local authority. There are exceptions, but teachers who have organised lively percussion groups, school choirs and orchestras, as well as those who are breaking new ground with folk and jazz groups, will be the first to admit that these activities are confined to a minority of schools and a minority of the children in these schools. The publicity given to some of these groups can create a false impression: moreover, there is a danger that some of our school choirs appearing in radio and television programmes, and in concerts at home and abroad, put undue strain on the children taking part and can result in the choir becoming a form of prestige for the school rather than part of the musical education of its children. *A school's music must be judged by what it offers to all the children and not only to a select few.*

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The music in any school depends primarily on the desire of the Head to include at least one able music teacher on his or her staff, and to persuade the local Education Authority to give that teacher as much help as possible in the way of facilities and equipment. Some authorities appoint a County Music Adviser, but it must be remembered that local education authorities have not nearly enough money to cover essential building and staffing and that the provision of laboratories and science equipment definitely takes precedence over the provision of a sound-proof music room or even a part-time music teacher.

When the teacher is appointed he is cramped by the small amount of time and space allowed. Such activities as school choir or orchestra have to be squeezed into the lunch period or after school hours. The same applies to music clubs and instrumental classes given by a visiting specialist. Children often have to make a difficult choice between music and games, and it is not surprising that parents and children get the impression that music is a negligible part of the child's education, even a waste of time. There are also more specialised but equally pressing problems: the appalling difficulty of teaching music to large mixed classes of adolescent boys and girls, the unsuitability of many class-rooms for singing owing to bad ventilation or acoustics or simply the fact that other classes are disturbed, and the placing of music in the timetable after P.E. or games, in the mistaken belief that it is a quiet period of relaxation.

Before going on to proposals for improving the situation in all schools, I want to quote two examples of work being done under existing conditions, the first from the Headmistress of an Infants school, to show how much can be achieved with young children, and the second from a

teacher in a Secondary Modern school who faces up to the problems involved with courage and understanding.

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From Margaret Sprakes, Infants' School Headmistress.

"Music should be a part of the children's daily life in school. When I was a class teacher my class was always singing: in odd moments we learned a new song or sang an old favourite. This put singing in its right perspective as something natural and enjoyable. We had no piano in the room, but young children sing better without a piano if their teacher can sing pleasantly and in tune. A teacher can spoil the singing of her class by using the piano too much and too heavily. Simple melodic percussive or plucked instruments, i.e., a guitar, are ideal for accompanying young children's voices, and the teacher is free to be in amongst the children. This is not possible with the piano.

From the earliest age children should be encouraged to listen to all kinds of sound, and materials provided such as home-made rattles, drums, chinese blocks, xylophones, glockenspiel, etc. The children can pick out tunes on the melodic instruments and can make up their own tunes. Later they can learn to write these down.

We have found that 6-7 years old is the ideal time for children to start learning stringed instruments. Seventeen children are learning the violin from an excellent visiting teacher, and I am teaching one child the cello. The children continue with the same teacher until they leave the junior school at eleven. We have an orchestra in the junior school of about sixty violins and six cellos, and one of the cellists is learning to play a small double bass. Some children take private lessons outside school, as it must be realised that while class teaching is an ideal beginning, it is by its very nature limited in scope.

It is not possible to provide individual teaching in school as there are many children to be taught in the short time allotted by the education authority, but I would like to see both individual and class teaching in every kind of school. The talent must be there in other schools as well as ours: we have three children whom we hope will gain junior exhibitions at one of the London colleges of music, and who would *never* have had music lessons at all had we not discovered their ability at school.

We try to give the children opportunities of listening to music. Short excerpts from records and occasional live performances are well received, and the children are listening much more intently than they did a few years ago. Music is not something now that others do. It is

a real part of life as of course it should be. What I would stress is that the infant school child is quite capable of studying music seriously, and I am all for starting musical studies as soon as the children are able to read."

* * *

From Dorothy Jenner, music teacher in a Secondary Modern School.

"It would be a great help to the secondary modern school if there could be a planned syllabus to be followed in all junior schools. In my own school (secondary girls), we receive pupils from five junior schools, two of which give excellent musical training, including recorder playing. In one the musical education is negligible. It is very difficult to teach these children all together in one class.

My own school, opened in September 1958, is considered in many respects to be a model building, but—they forgot to plan a music room. My room is just an ordinary form room with the addition of a piano and a record player. Certainly not sound proof, and we are in the academic block.

Most girls enjoy singing, and while most of the 500 girls in my school may never sing again in an organised group after they leave, I believe that the songs they learn will be an evergreen memory for many of them. We have a school concert every year in which all forms take part. It is not a public occasion—each form provides entertainment for the others and has an incentive to sing a few songs really well. The girls enjoy listening to each other and the staff enjoy it likewise. In fact I have been told that it is a more entertaining feature than the public events, when a picked choir has the honour.

Listening is a more difficult problem, but where music is based on folk song, or where an aria from an opera or oratorio can be learned in the class, it is a help for the pupils to have the music familiarised in this way. A song may be accepted or rejected on account of the words. More up-to-date free translations of German lieder are needed—most of them have such archaic words.

To educate children to reject what is inferior or insincere is a difficult task: I would welcome ideas on how to go about it. Of one thing I am sure—to condemn what they like, i.e., pop—is to invite their hostility immediately. The girl with the beautiful voice who sings an aria from the St. Matthew Passion and enjoys learning it with me, will sing a Cliff Richard number for her youth club in quite a different tone of voice. In widening their horizon they may veer towards what is lasting when they tire of trying to be fashionable. I have faith in the integrity of the teenager.

But how can we teach them *what* is insincere? A girl brought a record by Perry Como called—I think—*I Believe.* I found it so nauseating that I hardly dared look up. When I did so, I saw that some of them had tears in their eyes.

'No, I didn't like that much', was my verdict on this record, and I tried to explain that it was sentimental and lacked the nobility which one ought to feel present in music of a religious character. I then played a chorale from Bach's *Christmas Oratorio.*

'Oh, but Perry Como's real religious', said the girl who owned the record. 'He's a Catholic'.

Where do we go from there?"

## Music Teaching (2): As It Might Be

THIS IS, IN BROAD OUTLINE, a plan which could be carried out within the present schools' system. It is based on the principle that music is a living language which can be studied systematically and with enjoyment by children of all ages. The division made here into age groups is for convenience—it has no educational value. It would necessitate at least one teacher specialising in music for every Secondary school, and ideally speaking every teacher in the Primary schools should be able to teach music to his/her own class.

The great stumbling block is the shortage of properly trained teachers, but a start could be made with teachers from Training Colleges who have made a special study of music. These teachers to be gradually supplemented by fully trained music teachers who really care about both music and children and are forward-looking in trying out ways of bringing the two together. Such teachers are rare, and there are at present very few colleges which give them a suitable training.

**Infants (5-7 years):**

A daily period of 20-30 minutes, the lessons to include singing of nursery rhymes and suitable folk songs, acting, mime, and percussion band, each lesson planned to give a variety of suitable material, with rest periods following strenuous activity. Good use can be made of B.B.C. sound programmes, providing that the teacher is at hand to help the children, particularly in music and movement lessons. All movement should stem from the children as their active response to the music.

The teacher should know something of the child's anatomy and what is good or bad physically. Children of five may already have physical defects which need correction. The child's body is his instrument and

it is most important for him to learn to use it well. Many children in urban schools have already been physically repressed due to overcrowded homes and lack of play space—some are afraid to move at first and either gaze at the others or try to imitate them. It is vital for the children to have enough space and a teacher who will encourage them to move freely and joyously.

There should be no question of public performance or open lessons at this stage—parents or teachers can drop in to watch an ordinary lesson, preferably placed where the children cannot see them. Classes should not be larger than 20-25 children, but this is part of a larger problem which affects the whole of education.

**Juniors (7-11 years):**

The daily lessons to continue or to be replaced by at least three periods of 30 minutes each. The music and movement should open out now into more organised acting and miming of work songs, or songs with a story, also of suitable plays which use folk songs, such as Alan Bush's *The Press Gang*. I suggest folk song as the basis of the music used, because it is the basis of all composed music. It offers the children a wealth of tunes of great variety melodically and rhythmically. Moreover the words have a real meaning and their meaning and origin should be made clear to the children when they are learning the songs, and where possible should be linked up with the lives of the people they are learning about in English and History lessons. Part singing, accompanied and unaccompanied, sight reading, the practice of notation and the composition of melodies, can all be taught successfully during these four years. The children are so eager to learn and to create that there is almost no limit to what can be achieved—far more than is usually attempted in the junior school.

The teacher should know how to teach the children to breathe properly, and to produce their voices correctly, using the music they are learning rather than set exercises. Movement work can now include the invention of dances based on suitable dance compositions, i.e., a mazurka by Chopin, a polka by Smetana, dances by Bartok, etc. The phrasing and form of these pieces can be analysed, and made a starting point for aural training.

Recorder playing should now be introduced and parents encouraged or coerced into buying a recorder for each child. Sight reading should be stimulated with individual recorder books and individual song books. Group productions including recorders, singing, acting and dancing can now be prepared and performed to the other children in the school,

but the aim should be to involve all the children and to avoid singling out star performers. The idea that a child may be bad at music should be firmly stamped on—the same, of course, applies to other subjects.

Children in the junior school should also have the opportunity of seeing and hearing other instruments played by visiting performers, and should be allowed to handle and get the feel of an instrument they want to learn; they should also be told something about the structure of the instrument and how the sound is produced. If possible, a start should now be made with individual tuition, or in small groups, by a visiting specialist teacher, in string playing, also in other instruments—if the keenness of the pupils and co-operation of parents are ensured before the lessons begin.

**Parents:**

A word here about what must be expected of parents in the way of help and co-operation. Parents should be interested in what the school is doing or concerned with what it is *not* doing. They have to be tolerant of noise when a child is practising, and helpful about regular practice times, remembering that 15 minutes a day is better than an hour just before the lesson.

Their co-operation can best be shown by their generosity in buying an instrument, payment for which can be arranged through the school on the instalment plan. They must recognise that a musical instrument is at least as important in a child's development as a football or a tennis racquet.

Children should not be asked to perform in front of relations and friends. This is simply a form of parental vanity which often leads to the inferiority complex possessed by thousands of amateur performers, some of them music teachers.

**Secondary Education:**

If the music in the primary school has been properly taught, all the children should be looking forward to the next stage, and some should already be equipped to form the nucleus of instrumental groups.

Ideally the music in secondary schools should aim at a synthesis of the kind described by W. G. Smith in *Music in Education*. The boys in his school all sing and all take part in concerts and school productions, while those who want to do so, learn to play in the school orchestras, conduct, compose, orchestrate or arrange music for the school to perform, and help to teach the younger or less advanced pupils. Music in this school includes opera, ballet and plays with music, and the main

part of the work takes place in school time. In speaking of music appreciation, the author says: "the proper approach in a school should be by turning the pupils themselves into artists in every way possible to them. All will sing, some will be pianists, some violinists, almost all players in the orchestra actual or potential; and their interest in wireless programmes, gramophone recitals, or visiting artists will be rather that of musicians than the man in the street".

While this may seem to be a distant dream in the actual circumstances of most schools, it is emphatically a goal to aim for, and it is the exact opposite of the teaching in many secondary schools, where a few selected pupils are prepared for GCE music, a few perform at school concerts, and the rest are limited to a music club or other out-of-school activities.

The first problem is the initial approach, particularly in the secondary modern schools attended by the vast majority. Children at this stage have already come under the influence of pop—and many children have experienced only popular music of the lowest kind—records mass-produced and played on TV for quick sales and high profits—many of them of a nauseating and degrading character comparable to strip cartoons of the *Jane* or horror comic type.

The teacher is faced with the difficult task of bridging the gulf between "your" kind of music and "ours", and of creating enthusiasm for a musical language which entails mental and physical exertion on the part of the pupils if it is to be understood. Children in secondary modern schools have already been made to feel that they are academic failures, and they are therefore hostile to whatever is "square" or academic. Their hostility is directed towards the composers and performers of so-called "serious", or classical music, and also towards the teacher who tries to put it over to them. This problem is aggravated by the fact that music is primarily an emotional experience. The adolescent is going through a period of new and intense feelings, and of awareness of himself as a person.

The routine of school, and usually of home as well, does not take into account this new stage of development—in fact, it is arguable that the educational system steps up its demands from the child just at the period when they should be slowed down to allow his emotional needs some space and leisure in which to express themselves. Only in the creative arts do his emotions have some outlet, and this must be recognised if the music teaching at this period is to succeed.

To let off steam by playing the saxophone in a jazz band, imitating the style and gestures of an admired performer, to sing sad songs which

express the disillusionment of the child growing up to harsh realities which contradict the ideal world where parents and teachers give protection and security, and to listen to sweet and sensuous sounds as a background for day-dreaming—these are all ways in which the emotional impact of music is giving an outlet to the adolescent during a difficult period.

We have all experienced this and some, but not all of us, have learnt to grow out of it. The day-dreaming must help us to decide what we want to make of our lives, the disillusionment must lead to a facing up to reality and thinking for ourselves, and the letting off steam to a conscious direction of our energy and skill.

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The teachers who seem to me to be coping most successfully with this problem are the ones who go into the classroom with guitar or banjo and sing a negro blues or industrial folk song. They start with something not too unlike what the children know, but it has a content and sincerity which can make it a starting point of interest and discussion—who made the song, and why? What were the conditions which produced it? Are the tune and the words both sad, or only the words? Here is a possible first step in music criticism and appreciation, the eventual aim to be:—

(1) To give the pupils a critical awareness and knowledge which will enable them to enjoy what is best in music of every kind, and to reject what is inferior and insincere.

(2) To put the music in its historical perspective—seeing composers, performers and audience coming together in a particular period, and related to a social structure which influences the form and content of the music.

(3) To show how composed music has developed out of folk music, and how the content of all music becomes clearer as we understand the language better and come nearer to what the composer is trying to say.

This work should form the basis of a weekly class period throughout the school, and should include some singing or playing, aural training and sight reading, but not so much, or presented in such a way, as to kill interest. How much is achieved will depend on the age at which the children leave school, but the composition of songs and pieces to be performed at school should be encouraged, and problems of form and style dealt with through the study of actual music. As many performing groups of all kinds as can be accommodated, should also be encouraged in addition to the weekly lessons, and instruments of good quality purchased with the help of the school.

**Junior Music Centre:**

In addition to what each school can do, there should be in every district a Junior Music Centre where the pupils from all the schools in one area can meet after school hours or on Saturdays. The activities should include orchestras, choirs, jazz and folk groups, dancing of all kinds as well as opera, ballet, and the performance of musicals. Any child should be free to join and to get regular tuition as well as opportunities to perform, and the work should be graded so that a beginner can rise to a higher grade as soon as he is ready to do so. His inclusion in any performing group would depend on his regular attendance at an instrumental or vocal class, and he would be expected to do some practice between lessons. These classes and groups would supplement the music in each school, with the many advantages that pooling the resources of a district can bring.

The Centre could function in the best equipped of the local schools and be staffed by full-time teachers who would also be responsible for some of the teaching in the schools. Performing groups would prepare plays and concerts for performance at the schools, and these would stimulate new pupils to join the centre. School leavers would be encouraged to join an adult music centre of the same kind, creating a demand for this where it does not already exist. Above all, the pupils from different schools would be co-operating in a creative social activity, and the success of the music teaching in any school could be assessed by the number of pupils who want to go on making music when they leave.

Some of the boys and girls taking part in these musical activities will want to become professional performers or teachers, and will want to do so despite all attempts to discourage them by adults who know how hard it is for the professional musician to earn a living in this country.

A pupil who has worked his way through the school performing groups to the County or National Youth Orchestra, and who has attended the school music periods, should be quite as good a musician as the present school leaver with "A" level music and some years of private tuition. Entrance to a music college could be by real and practical tests—the performing of a concerto with an orchestra, the training and conducting of a choir in a suitably chosen work, the composition of a piece specially written and orchestrated for one of the groups. How much more stimulating and worth while would such an entrance test be than the present examination system and private

audition. And how helpful would the actual training and conducting of a choir be to the future teacher.

There is in fact little to be said in favour of the practical part of music examinations as compared with actual performances before an audience, and there is nothing to be said in favour of theory examinations as at present constituted. Apart from the fact that the syllabus for Associated Board and Diploma examinations covers only a small period of musical history, the harmony exercises can be worked, and the examination passed, without the student being able to hear a note of what he is writing. Aural tests are so rigid and limited in scope that it seems incomprehensible that no one has managed to get them altered in favour of listening to some actual music. It is claimed in some text books that the study of musical theory is a valuable discipline: I query this and would suggest that a far more valuable discipline is that of performing regularly with a choir or orchestra.

**Teacher training:**

For the above plan, many more teachers would be needed, and considerable alterations would have to be made in the methods of training teachers. The academic training of the professional musician is still largely based on the classical and romantic music of the 18th and 19th centuries and ignores folk music and jazz, though these are very much the concern both of the music students and of the children they are going to teach. The attitude also exists that the teacher is a performer who hasn't made the grade—this is all too often true—and that a fate worse than death awaits the unfortunate student condemned to teach in a secondary modern school.

The choice of instruments is also unrelated to the needs of school life. The piano is most useful if the student has already been studying it for some time, but if it is a question of starting from scratch there is much to be said for the piano accordion or guitar, supplemented by a wind instrument such as the recorder or clarinet.

Teacher training should also include conducting, arranging and composing for school groups, some knowledge of voice production and how to teach music and movement to various age groups. How much practical instruction of this kind is being given to the intending teacher? And how many groups exist at present in any music colleges for the express purpose of encouraging and helping the student who wants to teach?

No wonder the music teacher is ill equipped and often reflects this in an apologetic manner and an inferiority complex. He (or she) knows

that he is teaching a subject generally regarded as of little importance in school education, and often referred to as "one of the frills". There are periodic outcries against the poor pay and conditions of science teachers as compared with their fellow scientists in industry, but this reflects merely the fear that Britain is falling behind other countries in the production of future scientists and technologists, and is in no way concerned with the real education and development of the child.

## *The Training of Music Teachers*

THE CONTRIBUTIONS which follow are from practising teachers and deal with the three ways in which students can train to become music teachers:—

(1) As a student taking a teaching diploma at one of the schools of music
(2) As a graduate taking a post-graduate course at an Institute of Education
(3) As a student in a teacher training college which has a music department.

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(1) From William Monro, music teacher in a Middlesex Grammar School:

My four year course at the Royal College of Music for the G.R.S.M. (Graduate of the Royal Schools of Music), was completed in 1960. I found the College most unsatisfactory in many ways. Instruction is kept to a minimum. One lesson a week on your two solo instruments (one of these for only 20 minutes) and one lesson in Harmony, with a history lesson and orchestra if you were lucky, were all that you had on your time-table. It is true that G.R.S.M. students had a couple more lectures than ordinary students, but usually I only had to attend on three days a week, and sometimes for an hour only at that.

There was a premium on practice time (although this is being improved). In my first year on Wednesdays I had nothing between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. and was only allowed to use a practice room for one hour of that time.

More time could be given to practical teaching. The teaching, by students, of Junior Exhibitioners on Saturday morning is quite alien to the teaching of children in schools. It should be added, however, that students taking the G.R.S.M. are now encouraged to follow this up with a year at an Institute of Education.

On the whole the standard of teaching is high at the College, but the arrangement of lectures and classes, and the number of them, leaves much to be desired.

(2) From Doris Gould, Lecturer in the teaching of music at London University Institute of Education:

While I am in great sympathy with much of what Mrs. Armitage has to say about music in education, I think the position of the specialist music teacher in secondary schools and the problems of the training of such teachers, are not quite such isolated matters as she seems to imply but are part of the wider problem of the training and provision of specialist teachers of all kinds.

At the moment a university graduate in any field can, having taken a degree, elect to take a one year post-graduate teacher training course at an Institute of Education, or can take a teaching post without any training at all. In the same way a musician can take a University degree in music, or a conservatoire diploma, and can follow it by a one year post-graduate course. The argument is that the three year course will develop his musicianship and the one year course will give him insight into, and practice in, the pedagogical application. During this one year he will do a considerable amount of practical teaching in schools—if he goes to the London University Institute of Education he will spend four weeks in each of a primary, a secondary modern, a grammar or a comprehensive school. He will also spend time on conducting, recorder playing, and the various skills necessary in the classroom.

Whether this dichotomy in the training is desirable is certainly arguable, and it would be good to see some real attempt at a unified development of all round musicianship; but I think the chief points of criticism are those brought out in the Standing Conference of Music Committees' report on *The Training of Music Teachers*, obtainable from 26 Bedford Square, London, W.C.2. The conclusions on page 17 of this pamphlet state, among other things, that "the standing conference of County Music Committees is dissatisfied with the standard of music teaching in publicly maintained schools and believes that the remedy lies in the provision of better training for music teachers".

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(3) From John S. Owen, Senior Lecturer in Music, Trent Park Training College, Barnet:

**Music in Training Colleges—a personal view.**

One crucial factor in the present unsatisfactory situation of music in our schools is the widespread apathy shown by Heads, Authorities, and often (regrettably) the Government. There is no short-term solution here: but most Heads are ex-Training College students, so

it is important that music at the Training Colleges should have the strongest possible impact on the student body *generally*.

As regards the Primary Schools, music, along with other subjects, is a victim of the excessive concentration on the "eleven-plus"; here, at least, there is an obvious remedy! For one example of what *could* happen in Primary Schools, see the article on "Kodaly" in *Music in Education* July/August 1964. In Hungary, thanks to the single-minded zeal of Kodaly, a hundred state Primary schools (known as "music primary schools") have agreed to provide a minimum of one music lesson a day. The writer of the article, William Murphy, describes staggering achievements by children of primary school age in vocal sight-reading, "always to solfeggio and sung with tremendous enjoyment." He remarks further that this tremendously high standard and *the respect for music which goes with it* are fundamental in Hungary today.

For what *could* happen in Secondary Schools, see the same magazine May/June 1964, which contains an article dealing with the relevant sections of the Newsom Report. We read of a school in this country where the most remarkable feature . . . was its vigorous musical life. The headmaster throws himself wholeheartedly into this . . . because *he has a great belief in music* as a communal activity which brings together not only members of his staff and boys, but also the staff and girls of the sister school on the same site. Together they run a mixed school band and a mixed choir.

But this happy state of things is far from being universal, or even typical. According to Newsom, music is frequently the worst equipped and accommodated subject in the curriculum. With regard to accommodation specifically designed for music, we read that "half the schools in our survey had none, and another quarter had only makeshift provision . . . of all the practical subjects it (i.e. music) *had the least satisfactory provision.*" Incidentally, owing to the G.C.E. stranglehold, the position in many grammar schools (especially for boys) is in some ways even grimmer than in the Secondary Moderns. The music course divides into four main sections:—

(a) Written Music—harmony, word-setting, composition, etc.
(b) Outlines of History and Form.
(c) Practical Musicianship, including Keyboard Harmony.
(d) Training the Music Teacher.

As regards (a) and (b), the initial purpose, in many cases, is to eliminate the worst consequences of G.C.E. music. For example, many students equate written music with harmony in 4 parts (not for

voices but for nothing-in-particular), and find extreme difficulty in writing anything else. History and Form: for this read Appreciation and Enjoyment. For *all* music students, at whatever level, the *enjoyment* aspect needs emphasising all the time. *All* music used in this part of the course should be chosen at least as much for enjoyment as for its historical importance.

(c) For most students, Keyboard Harmony is virtually non-existent on arrival at College. Remedy: all Associated Board practical exams should be drastically revised. I would suggest: Performance 50%, Scales and Arpeggios (perhaps) 10%, the remaining 40% on general musicianship, instrumental sight-reading, vocal sight-reading (for everybody, not just singers) and, at least from Grade V, Keyboard harmony for pianists, with an alternative for non-pianists of simple keyboard work or some form of melodic improvisation.

The present theory exams should be abolished and integrated with a more enlightened School Certificate in music—the new C.S.E. in Music appears to take a few steps in the right direction. (Higher up the ladder, the scope of Music Diplomas and Degrees should be widened, with more emphasis by the former on a good musical background, and by the latter on practical musicianship). What we need is less musicology and more *music*—this is the best hope for bridging the gulf between the classics and pop.

(d) To return to Teacher Training, most of the things suggested on page 13 of this pamphlet go on at the College where I teach. There are flourishing vocal and instrumental activities, often run by the students themselves, many of whom are interested and expert in jazz and twentieth-century techniques.

Some sections of the Music Course are specifically devoted to Teaching Method and School Music Repertoire, the students being divided into groups according to their stage (Infant, Junior or Secondary). A large visiting staff teach a wide range of instruments and also voice production, and we have group recorder work.

Much more could and should be done, but there are three main difficulties:

(i) The unsatisfactory music set-up in so many schools causes great difficulty in obtaining suitable facilities for students on teaching practice, potentially one of the most valuable parts of their course. This applies particularly to primary schools, where it is quite common for a music student to have just half-an-hour's practice *per week* teaching his or her main subject!

(ii) Insufficient time for students' individual study. Many people

feel there are far too many actual lectures, especially on Education (with a capital E), which tends to dominate the whole course. In extreme cases, a brilliant student may fail the certificate examination because he cannot write glibly on Plato or on such subjects as the ultimate aims of education.

(iii) The rigidity of the time-table. More facilities are needed for linking Music with other subjects—a link with Drama would be particularly valuable, because of the need for a more imaginative approach. Music teaching in schools often has a tendency to be rather pedestrian and uninspiring, losing sight of the wood amid a multiplicity of trees.

To sum up: I agree whole-heartedly with the main points of *Does Music Matter?*, and if it helps to shake parents, teachers and Head Teachers, local and national authorities and everybody else concerned (not excluding Training Colleges) out of the prevailing state of complacent inertia, something really worthwhile will have been achieved.

# *Does Music Matter?*

TODAY THE SCIENCES and mathematics are the school subjects most closely linked with what appear to be the outstanding developments taking place in the world, and emphasis is strongly placed on these subjects whenever education is discussed. Some emphasis is also placed on the importance of a balanced relationship between the arts and science subjects, but the creative arts don't come into the picture at all. The most that is usually said for music, acting or painting as school subjects is that they have a therapeutic effect as a creative outlet, that they are a pleasing relaxation after lessons, or that they are suitable subjects for boys and girls who are not clever enough to pass examinations. A minority go so far as to point out that they are necessary to all children if they are to grow up into well balanced adults. What is never, or hardly ever, stressed, is that the expression of ideas through the creative arts is a decisive factor in determining how we shall use the discoveries of science—for life or for death.

We are at a crucial point in world history. We can either go on to unheard of discoveries and achievements to benefit mankind, or we can destroy mankind. The fact that enough missiles already exist to blow the world to smithereens, that men have been found to make and to learn to use these missiles, and that the majority of people have not even got

around to protesting about it, shows that mere survival, let alone the provision of a higher standard of life for all the peoples of the world, is by no means an academic question. It is easy to be lulled by the phrases: "It's no business of ours"; "nothing we can do about it"; "politics is a dirty game" etc.

To make the choice between life and death, on a world scale, means learning to think for ourselves, and we can only do this by being as well educated in the field of ideas as we are in the field of science. It is just as important to be able to understand what a novel, a film or a song is about, as it is to know what we are doing when we drive a car or operate an electric cooker. Education in the widest sense means not only understanding and being at home in the world; it means learning how to live at peace in the world.

In England, however, we only educate as much as will be profitable, and the question of what is best for the whole of our children does not come into it. If you doubt this, you have only to compare the small classes and staff of fully qualified teachers in all subjects, including music, at the best fee-paying schools, with the classes of 40 pupils and over, staff shortages, insufficiency of buildings and equipment in the state schools, which are attended by the vast majority.

In addition to such handicaps, children are faced today with an unprecedented barrage of comics, films, TV programmes and hit parade records, full of material which is decadent, nauseating and perverted in a variety of ways, and so cunningly advertised and distributed that children must have these things or be different from their contemporaries.

It is therefore vital for the child to understand and experience the language of real and sincere music, poetry, and painting, of all the creative arts, so that he can have a standard wherewith to judge what is being plugged at him, and so that he is no longer a passive and illiterate recipient of the mass media, but an active and intelligent critic. This is vital in two ways:—

(1) For the development of the child into someone who can understand the language of ideas, and be able to accept or reject them;
(2) Because it is the responsibility of parents and teachers to give to children the tools to create a peaceful world.

I end by quoting a passage from Christopher Caudwell's *Illusion and Reality*, because it sums up what I have been trying to say: "ART IS THE SCIENCE OF FEELING, SCIENCE THE ART OF KNOWING. WE MUST KNOW TO BE ABLE TO DO, BUT WE MUST FEEL TO KNOW WHAT TO DO".

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